



## Monthly Update for Members

February 2010

### REGULATORY AND LAND ACCESS ISSUES

#### Bathurst Caribou Public Hearings

There has been considerable interest and public dialogue about the Bathurst Caribou herd in the Slave Geological Province. The Wek'eezhii Renewable Resource Board (WRRB) is considering new management options on how to conserve the herd in the face of suggestions the herds have dwindled significantly in the past few years. The GNWT Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), together with the Tlicho Government have made a Joint Submission to the Board and it is proposed that these options will be discussed at Public Hearings to be held by the Board in the Tlicho community of Bechoko from March 22-26, 2010.

It is the opinion of the Chamber that the activities of the mining and exploration industry cannot account for the reported declines in the caribou populations. Recent surveys by operating mines also indicate that numbers of caribou may have been under reported in past surveys. The Chamber will make a Submission to the Board and will attend at the hearings. Our Submission will ask that the industry be included in the development of any management plans and express the industry's willingness to work towards a strategy and management plan that does not limit or ban mineral activity in the Slave Geological Province.

#### Nahanni Nááts'ihch'oh National Park

Parks Canada is currently undertaking public consultations for the proposed Nááts'ihch'oh National Park, located at the headwaters of the Nahanni within the Sahtu Settlement Area (the northwest extension of Nahanni National Park). A Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment (MERA) was completed in 2007 and three boundary options have now been proposed by Parks Canada and are under consideration by government and communities. Copies of the maps showing the three boundary options and the results of the mineral mapping are available by contacting the Chamber office.

The Chamber of Mines and some of its member companies has been in dialogue with Parks Canada, and a formal consultation meeting is planned for March 22, 2010 in Yellowknife. Chamber members and industry representatives with an interest in mineral potential along the NWT-Yukon border are encouraged to get involved and discuss options for the park boundary.

#### GNWT Water Strategy

On November 4, 2009, the draft *Northern Voices, Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy* was released. The draft Strategy was developed using a collaborative partnership approach, involving Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Government of Northwest Territories, Aboriginal governments, regulatory boards and agencies, environmental organizations, industry and academic institutions.

The draft Strategy aims to address northern residents' concerns about water resources.. It recognizes pressures on the NWT's water, which includes climate change and human uses within and upstream of NWT. It promotes cooperation and communication among many organizations and individuals who

regulate or use water and those that have an interest in water stewardship. The final Strategy will also strengthen the position of the NWT as it negotiates transboundary water agreements with neighbouring jurisdictions.

The Chamber has asked the *Mining Association of Canada* to review the strategy and provide comments on behalf of the northern mining industry. Public comments are welcome until March 15, 2010. When reviewing the draft Strategy, consider whether the Strategy meets your needs as a water user or steward.

The draft strategy is available through the following link:

[http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/\\_live/pages/wpPages/water\\_resources\\_management\\_strategy.aspx](http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/water_resources_management_strategy.aspx)

Please provide your comments to [NWTWaterStrategy@gov.nt.ca](mailto:NWTWaterStrategy@gov.nt.ca).

### Nunavut Land Use Planning and Impact Assessment Act

The Chamber and its member continue to review the proposed Act. In January, while at the Vancouver Round Up mineral exploration conference, our team met with the Government of Nunavut and NTI to discuss industry concerns on the legislation.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The Chamber is working on an Infrastructure Plan that highlights the needs of the north's mining industry. This document will include an outline of several infrastructure initiatives such as the Taltson Hydro project, the Bathurst Inlet Port and Road (BIPAR), an all-weather road up the Slave Geological Province and from Manitoba into the Kivalliq, and alternative nuclear power options. It will include an assessment of the known mineral deposits in the north that would benefit from road, port and hydro development,

The next phase is to develop a fairly detailed cost/benefit report that shows the benefits of developing the north's mineral wealth. It is the Chamber's hope that the three territorial governments could be brought on board as plan supporters. The infrastructure plan will be presented to the Federal government as a unified plan from all northern territories and Aboriginal governments.

There is potential for the Chamber to promote infrastructure through Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) Regional Adaptation Collaborative (RAC) program. The RAC program focuses on climate change issues on infrastructure and is designed to build supportive frameworks and resources to help incorporate adaptation into policy, planning and operations. NRCAN approached the Chamber of Mines to discuss how the mineral industry could benefit from this program. An initial meeting with NRCAN representatives, territorial government representatives from the Yukon, NWT, and Nunavut, and geoscientists was held on February 23-24 in Yellowknife. Several projects have been proposed that could assist in research on infrastructure development or mine construction in the changing arctic climates.

## **COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

On February 10, 2010, the Hon. Robert McLeod, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Government of the Northwest Territories made a Statement on Support for Mining to the Legislative Assembly of the NWT. Members of the Board of Directors, staff of the Chamber and other representatives of the minerals industry were in attendance in the Public Gallery of the House for the Statement and were recognized by the Minister and other MLAs.

Minister McLeod talked about the work the GNWT is doing to support the mining industry and ensure the economy has a sector where development occurs and where that development is done responsibly and where NWT residents benefit. The Minister emphasized dialogue with industry stakeholders, including the Chamber of Mines, and recognized the work the Chamber is doing to improve relations between the mining industry and aboriginal communities.

The NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines welcomed the Minister's Statement and is working to find an ally in the GNWT as we push INAC for infrastructure development and regulatory reform across the north.

On Behalf of the Board,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Kearney', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Kearney, President  
NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines